

Nutrition Coordinating Committee (NCC) Meeting Minutes August 5, 1999

WELCOME

Dr. Van Hubbard convened the meeting at 2:00 PM and welcomed the participants. Drs. Barbara Bowman, Sarah Kuester, Laura Kettel-Khan, and Carol Macera from CDC in Atlanta, participated via teleconference. Dr. Hubbard asked Dr. Kathleen Ellwood, ARS, USDA to introduce Dr. Barbara Schneeman, Dean and Professor of Nutrition at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Schneeman will be working with Dr. Ellwood at ARS, USDA for the next year. Dr. Hubbard also introduced Dr. Michael McClure, NIEHS. Dr. Hubbard then asked all attendees to introduce themselves. (See attendee list at the end of these minutes.)

Minutes from the June 3, 1999 NCC Meeting

Minutes from the June 3, 1999 NCC Meeting had been sent to NCC members prior to the meeting. A motion for approval was carried without dissent.

Healthy People 2010

Dr. Hubbard stated that the Nutrition/Overweight Work Group provided hand-written comments on a hard copy of the nutrition chapter for Healthy People (HP) 2010 and submitted the document to ODPHP. Ms. Kathryn McMurry, ODPHP indicated that some global changes to the chapter were made by ODPHP and that the appeal process has taken longer than anticipated. She stated that each chapter in the report will go back to the workgroup coordinators, and that the nutrition chapter should be ready within the next few weeks. The target date for document clearance is September, and the "launch" date is set for January 24-28, 2000 (Appendix A). When the nutrition chapter is returned to the workgroup coordinators (NIH and FDA representatives), there will be a 72-hour turn-around time, and there will be a list summarizing all the changes to facilitate review by the workgroup.

National Academy of Sciences' Documents on Dietary Reference Intakes

Dr. Hubbard said that the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has two ongoing projects related to the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs); one concerns antioxidants and related compounds and the other is micronutrients. The NAS continues to hold meetings related to these projects and is working on the project reports. The NAS is proposing another effort on macronutrients and energy. This effort will start in October or soon thereafter. This effort probably will include

different types of fats, simple sugars, and amino acids as well as recommendations for energy intake and appropriate levels of energy expenditure. Dietary intakes and upper limits of intake for macronutrients will be evaluated. Financial and/or scientific contributions by NIH Institutes are still being sought for this effort. Interested Institutes should contact the DNRC. Interagency agreements with ODPHP can be established.

White House Conference on Nutrition

Dr. Paul Coates stated that efforts towards the White House Conference on Nutrition are moving slowly. Previous proposed meetings with White House representatives have been postponed; a meeting is now scheduled for Thursday, August 12, 1999. There has been a change in the proposed structure of the Conference; instead of convening a White House Conference, USDA and DHHS probably will convene a Joint Conference, perhaps with White House participation. Dr. Coates explained the difference in concept between a White House Conference and a conference with White House participation. The latter might simply involve a White House representative to open or close the meeting. This would make planning of the meeting easier and allow DHHS and USDA to be in control of the agenda. The Conference is expected to take place early in 2000, perhaps during March, which is National Nutrition Month. Dr. Varmus has endorsed this joint DHHS-USDA Conference on Nutrition and has sent that recommendation to Secretary Shalala. The ideas for the Conference will be shaped within the two Departments by the workgroup members.

Dietary Guidelines

The revised *Dietary Guidelines* (year 2000 edition), when completed by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), will be sent to the Secretaries of DHHS and USDA and then to the various agencies within the Departments. Dr. Hubbard indicated the benefit of indicating potential concerns about the revised *Dietary Guidelines* before the report is finalized. Kathryn McMurry stated that she would like reaction to the Committee's work from the NCC members based on discussion at the last DGAC meeting and the transcript provided from the meeting. ODPHP is hoping for a smooth process. They are aware of the need for stronger justification for some proposed changes. An outline of the major topics for discussion with regard to the Dietary Guidelines was provided to NCC members prior to the meeting (Appendix B). This list was used as a basis for the discussion. The next meeting of the DGAC will be held September 7-9, 1999 at the Waugh Auditorium located on the third floor of USDA's Economic Research Service, 1800 M Street NW, Washington, DC (Appendix C).

General

There was concern about the ability of the Dietary Guidelines to serve both the needs of consumers (as an education tool) and to serve as the basis for federal nutrition policy (as a political tool). Currently there are limited data to indicate who uses the *Dietary Guidelines* or how they are used.

Weight

There was concern that the messages to "achieve and maintain a healthy weight" or "improve weight" were not understandable to consumers. Focus groups did not understand that "maintain weight" means not to gain more weight. They thought "maintain weight" meant not to change their behaviors. There were several suggestions to improve the message from attendees such as "Don't gain any more weight" and "Move closer to your healthy weight." There was discussion about consistency of the *Dietary Guidelines* message with the *NIH Clinical Guidelines on Obesity*. There is concern that the benefits of losing 10% of excess weight are not clearly communicated and that overemphasis on achieving a BMI ≤ 25 will be demotivating. The message that health risks related to overweight/obesity are on a continuum needs to be stated clearly. The message should not imply that there are no risks until one reaches the obesity cuptoint of the BMI. With regard to youth, the weight guideline should consider the needs of children and adolescents who need to gain weight to grow properly. The use of BMI as an indication of overweight/obesity is confounded when applied to children because the BMI cut points change with age. The evaluation of children's weight should be referred to a health care provider. The difficulty of achieving "normal" weight for some individuals (because of genetic predisposition to obesity) needs to be addressed. The weight message can be very frustrating if obesity is blamed on "lack of control" or "failure of will."

Physical Activity

The need for a separate guideline for physical activity is controversial. Although the separate guideline highlights the importance of physical activity, the integration of activity with other health messages may be lost. Physical activity is important not only for maintaining a healthy weight, but is related to health of the cardiovascular system, musculoskeletal system, respiratory system, and other body systems. The expertise on the DGAC to address physical activity may be limited. Also, there is concern that this opens the door to other lifestyle messages.

Fat

There was concern about the use of the terms "low" and "moderate" in the same guideline. The DGAC is considering removing the reference to fat (total fat) and focusing only on saturated fat and cholesterol because the guideline for fat is not supportable for coronary heart disease and may not be supportable for cancer. For consumers who only see the headline, this change may imply that the total amount of fat consumed is not important as long as one watches saturated fat and

cholesterol intake. NCI will consider providing some additional comments regarding the relationship between total fat intake and various types of cancer.

The revised *Dietary Guidelines* will have a stronger statement about trans-fat than did the 1995 *Dietary Guidelines*. Because of the shift from an emphasis on nutrients to an emphasis on foods with the revised Guidelines, there is concern that consumers may think that each food should contain $\leq 30\%$ fat and be low in saturated fat. This concern needs to be evaluated within a focus group. There was also concern about placing an emphasis on plant-based foods because a plant-based diet is not necessarily lower in fat if it includes significant amounts of vegetable oils.

Pyramid

The guideline to adapt or use the Food Guide Pyramid was tested in focus groups. There is concern that the "variety" concept may lead to over consumption of food. The variety guideline is also vague and difficult for consumers to operationalize. The *Dietary Guidelines* should include a discussion of ways of eating within the Pyramid concept such as other choices for the calcium group for consumers who are lactose-intolerant or who don't usually consume dairy products. Concern was expressed about inconsistencies of serving sizes listed in the Pyramid and on food labels. The numbers of servings listed on the Pyramid should be more closely linked to calorie intake.

Added Sugars

The DGAC continues to focus on "added sugars" rather than total sugars in the diet; however, there is not currently an intent to quantify the desirable (or excessive) amount of sugar in the diet. There is some precedence for the focus on added sugars as it was used in establishing the caloric base of the Food Guide Pyramid. Concern was expressed among NCC members about the added sugars concept because the human body does not distinguish between added and "inherent" sugars. Also the consumption of grape and apple juice concentrates was questioned. Would this be added or "inherent" sugars? Some consumers in focus groups had difficulty understanding the meaning of added sugars. They thought it meant that sugar was added by the consumers to soda and other commercial foods. It should be noted that FDA is currently reviewing a proposal requesting that added sugars be listed on food labels.

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Sodium

There was brief discussion about sodium. One comment was that both sodium and salt should be mentioned in the text, but that only salt needed to be mentioned in

the headline. It was noted that a sodium intake of $\leq 2,400$ mg per day was used in developing the Food Guide Pyramid.

Fruits and Vegetables

It was noted that the NIH 5-A-Day Program is moving in the direction of suggesting that fruits be used to replace foods from the tip of the Pyramid. Use of the term "plenty" may be confusing for consumers; however, currently, average consumption of fruits and vegetables is below desired intake. It was suggested that use of the term "variety" would be useful in the context of fruits and vegetables.

Grains

Currently, the DGAC does not intend to emphasize the concept of glycemic index in the *Dietary Guidelines*. There was general agreement among NCC members that the *Dietary Guidelines* should not refer to the glycemic index. The DGAC wants to promote the use of whole grain products without suggesting that there be a decrease in the intake of refined grain products. More data are needed about current intakes of whole grain and refined grain products and the effects of the grain message on consumer behavior. Some concern was expressed about the products that industry may promote as whole grains (e.g., certain breakfast cereals). There was discussion of the folate content of whole grains versus refined grains (which are fortified with folate). There was general agreement that grain products should be emphasized primarily because of the nutrients they contain and not specifically because of their relationship to chronic disease prevention.

Alcohol

There was a suggestion that the list of people who should not drink (i.e., pregnant women, children, teenagers) should also include people with liver disease such as hepatitis C. Several other topics were briefly mentioned - calories from alcohol, number of drinks per day for older people, and the link of alcohol consumption to breast cancer.

Food Safety

There was general agreement that the topic of food safety should be limited to consumer food handling and preparation practices, rather than to the broad issue of food safety or the food safety problems encountered by the food industry and restaurants. Concern was expressed about the lack of specific expertise on the DGAC with regard to this topic and potential conflict with other food safety education programs.

Reports from NCC Members and Liaisons

Dr. Gilman Grave, NICHD, announced that NIA, NHLBI, NIDDK, ORWH and NICHD would host a workshop on "Fetal Origins of Adult Disease" on September 2-3, 1999 in Rockville. This workshop will cover the intergenerational effects of diet and other lifestyle factors on disease. A copy of the workshop agenda is provided as Appendix D. It was also noted that the next NCC Meeting may be rescheduled because it conflicts with this workshop.

Ms. Kathryn McMurry, ODPHP, announced that the Nutrition Policy Board met in May 1999 and recommended that work on the *Surgeon General's Report on Dietary Fat* be discontinued. Dr. Satcher agreed with this recommendation. Resources for this report will be directed to other projects such as the review on macronutrients or a Surgeon General's report on obesity.

Dr. Hubbard announced that the meeting "Obesity: the Public Health Crisis," organized by the American Obesity Association, will be held on September 15-16, 1999. Dr. Satcher has been invited to be the keynote speaker. It was also noted that Sarah Ferguson (the Duchess of York) will be in attendance at this meeting as the spokesperson for Weight Watchers International (Appendix E).

Ms. Karil Bialostosky, NCHS, CDC, provided copies of two NCHS reports, one on the use of dietary supplements in the US and one on blood folate and vitamin B-12. Copies of these documents are available from NCHS by calling 301-436-8500.

Dr. Coates made an announcement (at the request of Dr. Robert Katz from the Omega-3 Research Institute, Inc.) about the Omega-3 Oils and Related Reference Materials (O3O) Program. (See Appendix F).

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM. The next NCC Meeting is scheduled for September 2, 1999, from 2:00-4:00 PM. A notice will be sent if the NCC Meeting is rescheduled.

The agenda and list of attendees of the August 5, 1999 NIH NCC Meeting immediately follows these minutes.

Appendix A – Celebrating the Launch of Healthy People 2010

Appendix B – Suggested Discussion Topics Related to the Dietary Guidelines for

August 1999 NCC Meeting

Appendix C – Federal Register Notice on Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

Appendix D – Agenda for Workshop on Fetal Origins of Adult Disease,

September 2-3, 1999, Rockville, MD

Appendix E -Obesity: the Public Health Crisis

Appendix F – The Omega-3 Oils and Related Reference Materials (030) Program

Announcement